

the American people 2 years ago last week that they had a plan to address rising gas prices. It appears that plan was nothing more than election year politics. That's a shame because right now, Americans are paying nearly \$4 a gallon for gas. The effect of these rising prices is felt not just when we fill up our tank. We see the rising prices at the grocery store because our food is shipped in trucks all across this country.

The American people do not expect a quick fix, but they do expect us to work toward energy independence rather than simply pointing fingers and blame. We live in a global market and many nations are competing for oil. Let's start by promoting American alternative energy. Let's invest in American oil. Let's advance American energy exploration. The co-ops of America, led by National President Jack Wolfe, are leading the way.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

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COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING REFORM

(Mr. HODES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HODES. Madam Speaker, there's no doubt that the housing crisis and the consumer credit crunch are getting worse. Last week, we learned that the number of homes facing foreclosure more than doubled from last year. In my home State of New Hampshire, foreclosures have increased nearly 96 percent.

That is why it is so important that Congress pass the comprehensive housing package that is coming to the floor this week. The legislation is the most innovative and comprehensive solution to the housing crisis yet. It will give relief to the millions of working families struggling to pay their mortgage with the rising price of gas and food. It would help nearly 1.5 million Americans in need. Our package would also offer assistance to State and localities to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed properties.

Madam Speaker, our economy cannot rebound unless we act now to give relief to millions of Americans in need. We have a bold proposal to take this decisive action. I certainly hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle understand the urgent need and that we will receive bipartisan support for this proposal.

POLL RESULTS: MEDIA NOT OBJECTIVE

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, during a telephone town meeting

last night, I asked my constituents, "Do you think the media are fair and objective in their news coverage?" Ninety-one percent of the almost 400 respondents said the media are not fair, and only 7 percent said that they are fair.

This is an amazing result but not a surprising one, since slanted coverage pervades much of the news Americans get every day.

One of the greatest threats America faces is a biased media. If the American people don't get the facts, they can't make good decisions. And if they can't make good decisions, we won't have a democracy.

The national media need to let the American people make up their own minds, not tell them what to think.

ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, today we have an opportunity to signify an important milestone in Israel's history. We celebrate its 60th anniversary, a truly important time in Jewish history.

My district in the San Joaquin Valley is the bread basket of the Nation, but we have a unique relationship between California State University at Fresno and Ben Gurion University of the Negev. My constituents for years have been partnering with their counterparts in Israel to research water, irrigation technologies and agricultural solutions to problems that face our world.

Fresno State has a long history in working with many leading drip and micro-irrigation equipment manufacturers in Israel, and the university has a long history of exchange of information with the Agricultural Research Organization's Volcani Center in Israel, including exchange programs that have brought research scientists to work on water and salinity issues.

Fresno State continues today to have discussions with Israeli researchers and industry on how to extend a beneficial use of the world's ever shrinking supply of water for the important purpose of feeding our world.

For this and many other reasons, we recognize and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Nation of Israel.

FAILURE TO PASS THE COLOMBIA TRADE AGREEMENT HAS INCREASED THE COST OF U.S. EXPORTS BY MORE THAN \$1 BILLION

(Mr. WELLER of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask this House, why do we continue to punish Illinois and U.S. manufacturers and farmers?

In the 531 days since the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement was signed, U.S. products exported to Colombia have suffered over \$1 billion in taxes and tariffs because they were exported to the United States through Colombia. And during that period of time, Colombian products entering the United States come in duty free. That doesn't seem fair.

We have an agreement with Colombia to eliminate those tariffs, and every day we delay it costs almost \$190 million a week in higher tariffs on U.S.-made products.

The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is good for States like Illinois. I represent a State that's dependent on exports. Our biggest product we produce in the district I represent, we have 8,000 union workers who produce yellow bulldozers and construction equipment, something that's common and in need in places like Colombia.

Let's be competitive. Let's eliminate those tariffs. Let's bring up for a vote the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, on this National Teacher Day, I rise to single out just one of the many talented teachers in my congressional district.

Libby Anderson teaches second grade at Grover Heights Elementary School in Grover Beach. It's a national blue ribbon school. She is one of those gifted teachers with a truly unique way of igniting the interest of her students.

A few years ago, she led a class project where each student picked a lighthouse to study from around the country. Through that project one student learned of the Federal efforts to restore the Piedras Blancas lighthouse in my district.

Under her guidance, the class embarked on a campaign called "Pennies for Piedras" to raise money toward this effort. By the end of that school year, the students had raised \$1,337.30 in pennies.

I'm happy to say that her students have gone on to lead support for continued restoration of this special place.

This is just one example of the many exceptional ways this teacher touched the lives of her students and expanded their awareness of their community.

Our country is blessed to have teachers like Ms. Anderson who spark students' passions, encouraging them to get involved in the world around them.

ENERGY PRICES

(Mr. LATTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATTA. Madam Speaker, with no relief in sight for the American public as they continue to endure the costs

of skyrocketing energy costs, it's once again time to look at alternative sources to combat this problem.

China has plans to build 40 nuclear power plants in the next 15 years, investing approximately \$50 billion in these reactors.

The United States has not licensed a nuclear power plant in 30 years, while the current congressional leadership refuses to even consider the notion of nuclear power as a viable alternative energy source.

Of course we don't have to leave my home State of Ohio to find additional ways to increase domestic energy production. In northwest Ohio, alternative energy is abundant with the only wind turbines in the State, solar panel production, and coal liquefaction technology all adding to our energy production.

Whether we look at other countries, or in our own backyard, we must embrace alternative energy sources as one way to reduce our dependency on Middle Eastern oil and combat skyrocketing energy prices.

HOUSING FORECLOSURE CRISIS

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, Federal Chairman Ben Bernanke says Congress should do more to address the housing foreclosure crisis. I agree.

However, let me respectfully suggest to the Fed Chairman that he, too, can do much more to help. Let him use his considerable power to bring to the table the very big banks that aren't coming to do foreclosure workouts at the local level. They just happen to be the firms the Fed has been rewarding handsomely by injecting billions and billions of dollars to rescue them. You know the names: Citigroup, J.P. Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Wachovia.

Firms like Countrywide don't even show up when borrowers at the local level try to renegotiate their loans. Yet, the Federal Reserve has been rewarding them by putting them on their list of select primary dealers. Fancy that.

So, Mr. Bernanke, let me help you out. Here's a list of the firms you can invite right now. They're not responding to Ohioans witnessing foreclosure: Countrywide, Chase Mortgage, Citifinancial, GMAC, HSBC, Sovereign Bank, Indy Mac Bank, Popular Mortgage, Nova Star, Saxon Mortgage Services, Option One Mortgage, EMC Mortgage, ASC Servicing, HomeEq, Wilshire, Nationstar, Equifirst, Litton Loan, Flagstar.

Let's be honest. These mega firms are holding the levers of power over our homeowners. It's time the scales of justice had balance restored on behalf of our people.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

HOUSTON POLICE OFFICER RODNEY JOHNSON

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, Houston Police Officer Rodney Johnson was the best of the best, but he was killed by the worst of the worst.

An illegal outlaw from Mexico, Juan Leonardo Quintero-Perez, shot Officer Johnson four times in the back of the head after a routine traffic stop. Officer Johnson would still be alive today, enjoying time with his five children and his wife, Joslyn, a fellow Houston police officer, if our border was protected.

This lawless trespasser had already been deported for indecency with a child in 1998, but he sneaked across the border again to continue his crime spree. After coming to Houston, Quintero finally confessed to murdering one of Houston's finest.

Today, Quintero is on trial for capital murder in Houston, but the Mexican government, rather than pay restitution to the Johnson family, is paying for the battery of defense lawyers representing this cold-blooded cop killer.

Mexico is meddling in the U.S. court system, but Juan Quintero cannot miss his judgment day and his day with his Maker, because justice is what we do in America, even if the Mexican government doesn't like it.

And that's just the way it is.

BUILDING A BETTER NATION

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, last week the Labor Department reported that for the fourth month in a row our jobs are going south. We are losing more jobs, even as the middle class is struggling just to keep their heads above water.

We're in this mess because the Bush administration and its followers have failed to establish a fiscally responsible budget policy and are continuing to borrow and spend our Nation into the poor house.

In response to this downturn, Democrats are taking action. Today, we're holding an economic summit to determine how best to restore our ailing economy. Also this week we're going to begin to put together a second economic recovery effort directed at rebuilding America's infrastructure, first by enacting a housing package to help establish the floor in the housing market, and then we intend to invest in higher wage construction jobs that will stimulate local economies nationwide.

I hope my colleagues in both parties will join us in this effort to build a better Nation here at home and that, furthermore, the President will understand how important this is and sign the bill we intend to enact.

WASTE TO ENERGY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, yesterday I visited a waste-to-energy facility in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and concluded, once again, Lancaster County gets it right.

This facility is a great example of the kind of ingenuity that we need to put America on a path toward energy independence, and it is disposing of waste at the same time. The plant burns solid waste at very hot temperatures, using the heat to turn water into steam which is used to turn a turbine and create electricity.

Ninety percent of that electricity is sold to the local electric utility. Metals, glass and plastics are recycled out in the process.

This process is saving pollution from ending up in the Chesapeake Bay. It's saving land by reducing the need for landfills, and it's creating clean energy in the process.

One ton of solid waste has the energy equivalent of 1 barrel of oil. Last year, over 342,000 tons of waste were processed at the facility, and I'm told that something like 30,000 tons of trash a day is trucked out of New York City to landfills.

Maybe our State and community leaders should take a cue from the people of Lancaster County as we search for more energy to meet our needs.

RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES REQUIRE ACTION, NOT BLAME

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, the price of gasoline is now averaging over \$3.60 a gallon. House Democrats are working to provide some relief, but we face stiff opposition from the White House and congressional Republicans who have opposed every single energy bill that we have brought to the floor this year. When it comes to energy, the GOP doesn't want to work with us. They simply want to say "no."

When Democrats voted to repeal unnecessary subsidies to big oil companies so we could instead invest in clean, renewable energy, Republicans overwhelmingly voted "no." It didn't matter that the legislation would reduce our dependence on foreign oil, lower prices at the pump and create new, green jobs. They still preferred the status quo.

When Democrats passed the Energy Price Gouging Act to punish those who